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ABSTRACT

This paper on interlibrary loan and document supply in Malaysia covers the following topics: (1) trends and development in Malaysia; (2) the potential of inter-lending and document delivery programs, including the creation of a Malaysian bibliographic network; (3) number of libraries, including a table that shows the total number of libraries in 1997 broken down by type; (4) background information on the Document Delivery System (a library consortium initiated by the National Library of Malaysia in 1998), including members, services, staff, and requests for services; (5) problems associated with the success of the services; (6) turnaround time; and (7) recommendations. (Contains 21 references.) (MES)

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The Role of Inter-lending and Document Supply in Malaysia

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Abstract

While the economic and business activities show sign of sluggishness, it is not so in the field of education. Mushrooms of commercial colleges and public universities are being established and most of them are having links with universities abroad. Given such scenario and with support from the government, the goal of creating Malaysia as the center for academic excellence has become a reality. The growth of universities and colleges means more libraries but being at the infancy stages, most of them would rely very much on resource sharing for their information consumption. However, the current financial constraint calls for more effective inter-lending and document supply services. It would be interesting to see the role and the current status of inter-lending (ILL) and document supply, with some references to the way students and practicing librarians come to term with it. The paper also touches on the ILL services and usage in Malaysia and the extent to which the services are rendered.

Paper

Keywords: Inter-lending, Document Supply, Information Industry, Malaysia, Multi-media Super Corridor, ILL.

Introduction

The idea of global village is becoming a reality in the field of global communication,

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especially with the fax and the Internet developments. This has cost millions of Malaysian dollars in the expenditure, especially amidst the information-intensive world of the year 2020. In Malaysia, organizations have begun to subscribe to a networked environment. To this effect, IT vendors are also beginning to emphasize on the need for computer networking, and households have also started to look into access capabilities through networking. In the era of information superhighways, high speed and high capacity bandwidth can be used to permit voluminous and complex media types, like images, video and sound to transmit in real time. Libraries and information centers in Malaysia are not only able to access to a wider range of bibliographic information, but also to a multidimensional media of information. The networking systems allow enormous information to be to be made available and accessible, leading to social and economic progress. The development of library computerization and increasing society's value for information has led to the articulation of a new paradigm in inter-lending and document delivery and supply via networking system. Ability to transmit inter-lending requests expeditiously to libraries known to own the materials sought is vital to Malaysian libraries' present planning that could speed up document delivery. The development has indeed opened up the window of opportunities for the libraries and information centers to participate on a wider range through the databases covering local collection and information on Malaysia that will not only allow faster sharing and information delivery but also will boost the availability of the much-needed local information content that could also promote investment.

Trends and Development in a Malaysia

Inter-lending and Document Delivery System has been recognised as important in view of the fact no single library can be independent of its collection. This is reflected by the increasing number of libraries opting to become members of the Consortium of Libraries and Organisations Document Delivery Programme. However, there are room for further development in the services rendered in terms of facilities, cost, period of delivery and finally promotion of the services. Promotion of the service is crucial so that it will be in consonant with the proliferation of electronic information products. In some institutions users are still reluctant to use the inter-lending facilities even though they are in dire need for specific information. In other words, they need to be acculturated with the inter-lending and delivery services as part of their process of information seeking and use.

Potential of Inter-lending and Document Delivery Programmes

The creation of a Malaysian bibliographic network is an impetus to the development of the national bibliographic database and the provision of national bibliographic and documentation services. The Jaringan Ilmu (Knowledge Network) is a joint effort between the National Library of Malaysia and the Malaysian Information (MIMOS) and under this project all libraries throughout the country would be linked in a wide area network, based on the MIMOS' Joint Advanced Research Integrated Network (Jaring). This nation-wide integrated library information networking and services would be linked to academic, public, special, research and school and college libraries, other research public, and private institutions through Internet. Millions of records could be accessible and this could encourage collaboration between public and private sectors. Among the services that are expected from the network are: interlibrary loan and document delivery; information search; duplication of information; information retrieval; and announcement and mailing list.

Number of Libraries

Economic development, mushrooming of higher education institutions, and globalization has increase the demand for and the supply of information of a much wider range. The number of libraries has increased at an encouraging rate in so much that that it surpasses the supply of professional librarians. Table I show the total number of libraries in 1997 but it has increased by now. The number of commercial colleges providing diploma and degree programmes has

been 556 in 1999. The Accreditation Unit of the Ministry of Education, Malaysia has it as an essential requirement for each of this institution to incorporate a well-established library before the approval for the running of the programme is give.

Table 1

TOTAL NUMBER OF LIBRARIES IN MALAYSIA, 1997

Type of Libraries	Number of Libraries
National Library	1
State Public Libraries - Main State Public Library - Territory Libraries - Branch Libraries - Town Libraries - Village Libraries - Mobile Libraries	 14 3 92 54 247 97
Rural Community Centre Libraries - KEMAS, RISDA, FELDA - Library Under Local Government Authorities - Others (mosque, etc)	 216 201 258
University Libraries - Government - Private	 11 3
University Branch Campus	30
Institute of Higher Learning Libraries (College/Institute, Polytechnic, Teachers Training College, MARA Junior Science College)	(110)
Special Libraries - Ministry/Government Department - Statutory Body/Private Agency	 186 (207)
School Resource Centres - Secondary Schools - Primary Schools	 (1,538) (7,084)
TOTAL	10,362

Note: (The number of libraries has increased to approximately 11, 000, i.e. in addition to 600 new private colleges).
Source: Zawiyah Baba. "Seventh Conference of Directors of National Libraries in Asia and Oceania (CDNLAO) - Malaysia: A Country Report." Sekitar Perpustakaan, bil. 27 1998.

Document Delivery System: Background Information

The Document Delivery Supply system, known as Inter-library Loan among libraries before, has been part of the resource sharing effort among libraries. One of the main advantages of this system is that libraries can, to a certain extent save as they are not necessary to buy materials that are already available in member libraries. The Document Delivery System consortium among libraries, initiated by the National Library of Malaysia was formed in 2nd June 1998, with the objective of encouraging local delivery services and to enable easy access of information at local and international level. The Document Delivery Supply system is a part of the National Availability of Publication which is part of the Universal Availability of Publication Program, initiated by IFLA and supported by UNESCO. Most of the inter-lending and document delivery processes are still operated manually. With the widespread use of

Telnet and Internet searching of bibliographic records activities would be easily done.

Table 2 shows the number of members involved in the Consortium of Documentation Supply. The National Library, all the university and public libraries are involved and the number of special libraries and information centre is on the increase.

Table 2

Libraries Involved in the Document Delivery Supply Consortium Until May 1998

Types of Library	Number
Academic and University Libraries	40
Government Departments	125
Commercial Agencies	37
NGOs	79
TOTAL	310

The Tun Abdul Razak Library of University of Technology MARA (UTMARA) has been a member of this consortium since the 15th July 1988. Despite the economic slowdown at the present moment, the system is regarded as even more important in ensuring that the teaching and learning process is not affected.

The services rendered includes the borrowing of books, photocopied articles and print-out from data bases. Two services given are identified as:

- Internal services for students and staff
- External services to the members of the consortium.

The total number of staff involved for these services are two. A short survey was conducted on sixty three students from the final year. Although clearly there is an indication of their awareness of the existence of the service, there is a clear reluctance on their part to take advantage of the service. A short survey on 66 students of the Faculty of Information Studies provides some data on their perception towards the ILL services that could be used to further improve the document delivery programme. Although 54 of them are aware of the availability of the service only three have used it so far. Most of them, that is 35 say that they are not satisfied with the service in terms of delivery services as well as the promotion of the service itself.

Overall, the following table 3 revealed the extent of the demand of the users both internal as well as external users up to August, 1998. The total requests for the services is 934, with only 247 from within the university users. Appendixes 1-3, however look at the case of three main institutions that have close association with the university. The total number of requests from the three institutions UTMARA for the services was only 26 while the number of requests made by UTMARA to outside institutions is only 34. [1] It is therefore necessary for the library to give assessment so that the confidence level of the users in general could be maintained.

Table 3

Libraries Involved in the Document Delivery Supply Consortium Until May 1998

Month	LoanOut	Loan	Total
Jan	28	7	35
Feb.	112	41	153
Mar.	69	7	76
April	38	4	42
May	19	6	25
June	90	45	135
July	77	38	115
August	63	24	87
Sept.	67	8	75
Oct.	54	24	79
Nov.	60	27	87
Dec.	10	15	25
TOTAL	637	247	934

It would be worthwhile to compare the extent of the inter-lending and document supply services in the Universiti Technology Malaysia, based on the 1998 research conducted by Rashidah Abdul Rahman of the Document Delivery System in this library. [2] The study was made based on the interview to the staff responsible for the inter-lending service of the UTM library. Data and statistics was also provided by the library based on the library's records. The findings indicated a more success story in the response from the users, although the success of the delivery from the other institutions leaves much to be desired. (see table 4). In 1995 the number of requests was 1265, and in 1996, 1260, but dropped to 1178 in 1997. The higher response from users as compared to UTMARA may be due to the fact that, UTM has been a full-fledged universiti for along time and graduate studies and research has been the order there. The findings revealed that researchers are given higher priority for the services.

Table 4
Request to Inter-lending to Outside Institutions by Year in UTM

Tahun	No. of Requests	Successful supply	Percentage
1994	1188	580	48
1995	1265	625	49.1
1996	1260	631	50.1
1997	1178	596	50.6

Table 5

Request to Inter-lending to From Institutions by Year to UTM Library

Tahun	No. of Requests	Successful Supply	Percentage
1994	350	198	52.4
1995	407	165	40.5
1996	435	253	58.2
1997	365	183	50.1

Table 5, on the other hand shows the request made by institution to the UTM library for document supply. There has not been much increase in the demand while the success rate of document supply has been about 50 per cent from 1994 right through 1997.

Table 6

Types of Materials Requested

Tahun	Books	Percentage	Articles	Percentage
1994	123	10.4	1065	89.6
1995	190	15	1075	85
1996	192	15.2	1068	84.8
1997	203	17.2	975	82.8

Table 6 above revealed that the number of requests for articles far exceeded the number of requests for books, from 1994 through 1997. The requests for articles exceed more than 80 per cent every year as compared to books.

Problems Associated with the Success of the Services

The present economic problem has indeed slowed down the recruitment of new staff. The UTMARA library, like most libraries is still under-staffed and as such, only two professional staff are provided to man both the internal and external requests for information. This problem is compounded with similar lack of staff in other department within the library that would otherwise help in speeding the flow of the services. The table 7 below shows the below shows the total number of personnel involved in the system in eight academic libraries in Malaysia. It can be said that the number of personnel will have bearings on the extent of the services that could be rendered. Future more, the number is not consonant to the number of students and academic staff who constitute the library users. In UTMARA for example, the total number of students is 60,000 and 3000academic staff, against 2 staff manning the document delivery system. The UNIMAS is still very new with much less number of students, yet the department is manned by 3 staff.

Table 7

Staffing of Document Delivery Departments in Universities in Malaysia

No.	Name of University	No. of Personnel
1	University Teknologi MARA	2
2	Universiti Sains Malaysia	4
3	University of Malaya	2
4	Universiti Putra Malaysia	4
5	Universiti Utara Malaysia	3
6	Universiti Teknologi Malaysia	3
7	Universiti Malaysia Sarawak	3
8	International Islamic University	2

Turn around Time

One of the main problems faced by the administration of the service has been the turn around time. In general most institutions share the fact that the delivery time spent for delivery from other local institutions is between two to three weeks while materials that are needed urgently could be delivered between two to three days. For materials requested from abroad may take up to two weeks. Basically, most institution share the same problems associated with the late delivery for the requested items and they are:

- materials are currently on loan
- material are being bound
- not available on the shelves
- materials available and second request has to be made to another library.

Recommendations

- Additional staffing should be given to man the document delivery department to reduce the load of each staff. These staff can take over some of the responsibilities of the professionals and this will reduce the chances that the requests not being processed.
- More photocopies and facsimile should be provided to facilitate the inter-lending and document supply process.
- The inter-lending processed should be automated, to reduce the routine tasks.

Conclusion

It must also be reiterated here that although commitment towards ILL services is given it is by no mean without its own limitation. The success of the inter-lending and document supply services is highly dependent on the commitment, support and creativity, not only from the libraries but also from all authorities involved. The main goal of the document delivery system is to provide access to all sources of information both local and international. Concerted effort should be made by most institution to promote the inter-lending and document supply services in light of the current financial constraint. Turnaround time has been one factor that affects user satisfaction on the document delivery services. The application of IT has helped to a certain extent in the reduction of the routine tasks and also enable fast channelling of requests online. It allows easy means of communication between libraries for information through the e-mail as well using other facilities, such as kurier and facsimile. It is also seen that the rate of fees charged by institution in Malaysia is not standardised. While some libraries' rate is higher than others, there are also certain institutions, which do not require any fee.

Endnotes

1 University Technology MARA. The Monthly statistics of the Tun Abdul Razak Library. Shaha Alam: UTM, 1999.

2 Rashidah Abdul Rahman, Research on the management of the document delivery system in the Sultanah Zahariah Library, Univeristi Technology Malaysia. Thesis, Universiti Teknologi MARA, 1998.

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Appendix 1

STATISTICS OF DOCUMENT DELIVERY SUPPLY BY ORGANISATION
JANUARY - DECEMBER 1998
ORGANISATION : UNIVERSITI TEKNOLOGI MALAYSIA

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Appendix 2

STATISTICS OF DOCUMENT DELIVERY SUPPLY BY ORGANISATION
JANUARY - DECEMBER 1998
ORGANISATION : UNIVERSITI MALAYA

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Appendix:3

STATISTICS OF DOCUMENT DELIVERY SUPPLY BY ORGANISATION
JANUARY - DECEMBER 1998
ORGANISATION : SIRIM

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